No. 48. On the good Samaritan.

Luke 10th, 36th, 37th Verses.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said, he that shewed mercy on him—then said Jesus unto him, go and do thou likewise.

Our Saviour in this chapter is giving directions to seventy additional disciples, whom He had appointed "to go into every city and place whither "he himself would come," to prepare the inhabitants to embrace the Gospel dispensation. After they had received their instructions, they went in obedience to his commands. And when they returned they told their Master, that, so abundant was their success through His name, the very devils were subject unto them. From the manner in which they relate the miraculous occurrence, it seems that they were not prepared to expect so wonderful a subjection to their feeble efforts. "And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as light-"ning fall from heaven"—the idolatry of the Gentiles

and the wickedneſs of the Jews have exalted the enemy of mankind; but the propagation of my Religion, of this new covenant which I shall make with all the earth, shall subject him "to everlaſting chains under "darkneſs. In that hour Jeſus rejoiced in spirit "and said," in a tranſport of rapture, foreſeeing the bleſsed effects of the evangelical revelation, "I thank "thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou "haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and "revealed them unto babes, even so Father, for so it "seemed good in thy sight:"—not the Philoſophers of Greece and Rome, not the Rabbins learned in their law, are able to acquaint the world what simplicity of worſhip is moſt acceptable to the Supreme Being, and how sinful man is reſtored to His mercy and favour; theſe important tidings are to be firſt promulged by artleſs and ignorant men, to be "endowed, for the "purpoſe, with power from on high. And behold "a certain lawyer," one of thoſe Scribes whoſe profeſsion was to teach the law of Moſes, "stood up and

"tempted *Him*," in order to discover, probably, whether *His* doctrine corresponded to that of *Moses*, "saying, *Master*, what shall I do to inherit eternal "life?" *Jesus*, alluding to his profession, answers by enquiring what the *Law* enjoined upon that interesting article? The *Scribe* answering out of *Deuteronomy* 6th *Chap.* 5th *Verse*, "said, thou shalt love the *Lord* "thy *God* with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, "and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, "and thy neighbor as thyself; *Jesus* said unto him, "thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live. "But the *Scribe*, willing to justify himself, said unto "*Jesus*, and who is my neighbor?" In his estimation none were brethren but *Israelites*, and none neighbors but *Proselytes*; for of these two denominations of men the *Jewish Church* was composed. The blessed *Jesus* answers him in such a manner as to make the feelings of his heart overcome the prejudices of his understanding, by relating what is called the parable of the good *Samaritan*.

"A certain man went down from Jeruſalem to "Jericho"—and, in going through thoſe wild deſerts and dangerous roads to the valley of Jericho—" he "fell among thieves;"—ſo many robberies and murders were committed on this road which lay through a kind of wilderneſs, that it was expreſsively termed the bloody way—" who ſtripped him of his raiment "and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half "dead"—not content with robbing him of his money, they dangerouſly wounded and left him with ſcarce ſigns of life. "And by chance there came down a "certain prieſt that way, and when he ſaw him he "paſsed by on the other ſide. And likewiſe a Levite, "when he was at the place, came and looked on him, "and paſsed by on the other ſide. But a certain "Samaritan as he journeyed came where he was, and "when he ſaw him he had compaſsion on him, and "went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in "oil and wine, and ſet him on his own beaſt, and "brought him to an inn and took care of him." In

the eastern countries there were not inns for the entertainment, but only houses for the lodging of strangers. Travellers therefore carried their own provisions along with them. The humane Samaritan took of his own wine, and gave to the poor man and refreshed his spirits, and poured oil, of a balsamic healing quality, into his wounds. After he had taken him to such an inn as the country afforded, he left him there on the following day to the care of his host, "and when "he departed he took out two-pence"—equal to about fifteen-pence of our money—"and said, take care of "him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come "again I will repay thee"—from which we may conjecture that the good Samaritan was either in narrow circumstances, or that the way he had to travel was so dangerous he brought no more money with him than was absolutely necessary for his journey—either of which cases being true, enhances very greatly his kindness. I am just to observe further, that the hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans was implacable,

arising, in some measure, from a disagreement in religious opinions. When the Jews would shew the utmost detestation of our Saviour, they express themselves with this bitter invective—"Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil." In equal abhorrence were the Jews held by the Samaritans. The Application therefore the Scribe must necessarily make was, that all mankind, even his bitterest enemies, were his neighbors and his brethren.

Having illustrated the passages in the parable which seemed to carry with them a little obscurity, I shall make such reflections upon it as may, by God's blessing, induce those who hear me, to go and do likewise.

When the traveller was fainting under the smart of his wounds, exposed without a covering to the inconvenience of the climate, dreading either that he should perish through neglect, or afraid that thieves wantonly inhuman, might, when they found him destitute of both money and clothes, wreak their indignant disappointment by multiplying his wounds, thus hastening his

death by the severity of torture, lo! a certain priest, a preacher of righteousness, came down that way. When he saw the robe of religion, no doubt he returned thanks to God for sending him a deliverer. When he beheld the priest no doubt he prepared himself to deliver the sad recital of his calamities, and to appeal, with elo= quent sensibility, to his nakedness and his wounds for the melancholy confirmation. A good mind indeed would have anticipated him, saying, "what shall I "do for thee?" But the priest, to his eternal disgrace, passed by on the other side.

And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him with still greater inhumanity than the priest who had preceded him; the Levite went near and stood over him, contemplating his sufferings, and then passed by on the other side.

Tho humanity seems inherent in man, yet if there be a character from which we look for peculiar expressions of it, it is surely from him who is pro= fessionally taught that "mercy is better than sacrifice,"

it is surely from him whose studies point out to him how agreeable mercy is to the nature of God—who "by "setting his affections on things above" is so weaned from delusive pleasures here below, that he has not the same temptations to covetousness with other men—if from any character acts of humanity are expected, it is, it must be, from one of this description. That there should be inconsistency in any man's conduct is much to be lamented—but that there should be a contradiction between the preaching and the practice of him who is separated from the people to declare unto them the law of the Lord, and who is required by both God and man, and justly required, to shew the excellency of it in his own conduct, and by his own example—words cannot express how contemptible is such a being.

When the unfortunate traveller had been cruelly and despitefully neglected by two of his own countrymen who were appointed to teach the statutes and the ordinances unto Israel—when assistance had been refused him by those who taught that the second com-

mandment enjoined the sons of Israel to love their neighbors as themselves, the pain of his wounds would be increased by their mortifying neglect, by their cruel disappointment. When he first beheld the Priest no doubt he indulged the joyful hopes that he should, thro' the compassion of the Minister of Religion, be restored to the society of his friends. And tho' once cruelly passed by, he might not, when he perceived the Levite approaching, abandon himself to the horrors of despair. But when he had been twice neglected, and by men whose profession required them to recommend in their discourses the duty, and to exemplify in their conduct the amiableness of compassion, what further hopes could he entertain—and especially from a Samaritan? View with me for a moment the situation of both body and mind of the wounded traveller.

Behold him laid in this dangerous road, so much dreaded by the frequency of robberies and the infliction of cruelty—behold him stripped of his clothes and wounded by barbarity, left even "hard at death's door,"

without the prospect of succour or relief; his sufferings embittered by the reflection of leaving, perhaps an affectionate wife and a beloved family behind him—of dying, without hearing the voice, beholding the countenance, clasping, in a last embrace, those dearest to his heart—without the comfort of giving them his blessing, and having the bed of death made easier by their solicitous attentions. He is awakened from his reflections by the arrival of the good Samaritan. "For as soon "as the Samaritan saw him, he had compassion on "him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, "pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own "beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of "him." Methinks I see the benevolent Samaritan, after refreshing his spirits, and binding up his wounds, raising him gently from the ground, and setting him carefully on his own beast, observing, with looks of compassion, whether he could bear its uneasy steps, and enquiring, with the accents of affection, whether he felt himself relieved? He completes the kindness he had

begun—for when he got the unfortunate man to an inn, he took care of him, administering what his necessities demanded, and what the place supplied.—"And on the morrow when he departed," leaving what might be sufficient to defray the expences the wounded traveller might incur, he committed him to the attentions of his host, "saying, take care of him, and "whatsoever thou spendest more on his account, when "I come again I will repay thee."

Let us accompany the good Samaritan a little way on his journey, and observe the reflections which may naturally be supposed to arise in his mind.

The greatest and truest pleasure we can enjoy in this life, is to look back with satisfaction on those parts of our conduct which unequivocally demonstrate our love of God, and good-will towards men.

When the good Samaritan had bid adieu to the afflicted stranger, he would take a review of the affecting circumstances which had so lately occurred.

Sorry for the pitiable situation of the unhappy

being who had called for the exercise of his compassion, he would rejoice in having had the opportunity of rescuing a wretched creature from misery and from death. The poor man's wounds—his utter inability to stir from the place where the hands of robbers had so inhumanly laid him—the recollection of his circumstances and his friends—all which the unfortunate traveller would doubtless relate to him—of perhaps a beloved wife and numerous offspring waiting impatiently his return, would again swell his eye with the tear of compassion, and rend his heart with the feelings of sorrow. He would curse the prejudice that subsisted with such inveterate rigour between his countrymen and the Jews. As a man, he would esteem humanity inseparable from his nature. Had he himself been in such a miserable situation, "tho' there "were no dealings between the Jews and the Samaritans," and of consequence he could not have hoped for relief from a Jew, yet what he would desire of others he would shew to them. And he would go on his

way rejoicing and thanking God, not only that he was superior to such irrational prejudices, but that he had been providentially sent that way, left, had it fallen to some of his countrymen, the unhappy man might have died, not altogether through their insensibility and hard-heartedness, but through national prejudice and religious hatred.

Having made such reflections upon the parable as the several parts of it seem to suggest, it only remains that I make an application.

The Scribe, when he tempted our Saviour, desired to know of Him "what he should do to inherit "eternal life." In answer to which question, after assuring him that the love of God is to be the foundation on which his superstructure is to be raised, He relates this beautiful parable, and concludes with these emphatical words—go, and do thou likewise: if eternal life be thy object—if thou art really desirous of dwelling with God for ever and ever, love God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and

give this proof of thy love of God, the beſt, the moſt convincing, and ſatisfactory; nay indeed the only proof—go and do as the good Samaritan did. If thy circumſtances enable thee, "when thou ſeeſt the poor "without covering, clothe him, and turn not away "from thine own fleſh—deal thy bread to the hungry, "and give drink to the thirſty ſoul," then art thou giving an evidence of thy love of God. But if thy own neceſſities forbid ſuch expreſſions of kindneſs, thou canſt at leaſt be civil, and courteous, and compaſſionate. Let us beware, my Brethren, that we place not our religion in acts of Godlineſs—in going to Church oft, in repeating many prayers—in aſuming a demure look, and wearing a ſevere countenance. Thou mayſt pray like Daniel three times in a day—like the Phariſee faſt twice in a week—yet if thou doſt not adorn ſuch ſ[illegible]rity of religion by tenderneſs, and compaſion, and charity—it is not the Religion of Chriſt, it is the Religion of the Devil; it is the ſeducing, the fatal bait which the grand enemy of mankind ſo

officiously throws in our way to lead us, by imperceptible degrees, to eternal perdition. What can be easier than to go regularly to Church at the stated hours of prayer, and to offer sacrifice "unto the Lord "our God of that which costs us nothing? Let our alms "as well as our prayers go up as a memorial before "God." The Supreme Judge will reward, or rather will accept us not merely according to our prayers, but our charity. Let every man therefore who, like the Scribe, would know what he shall do to inherit eternal life, as the good Samaritan did, let him go and do likewise.

Theophs. J. St. John.

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The Author, having now published all the discourses he intends at present, 52, desires respectfully to return his thanks to those Clergymen who have so liberally encouraged him to proceed in the publication. He was still more encouraged by hearing that, in many Parishes, where his MSS. have been already preached, the congregations and communicants are rapidly increasing. His sermons are not moral essays or philosophical disquisitions, because he attributes to such perverted preaching the total ignorance of Christianity, the lukewarmness of sentiment, and degeneracy of conduct by which so very many, who profess themselves members of our church, are unhappily distinguished. He is fully persuaded that every conscientious Clergyman who may do him the honour to use them, when he is to give an account of his preaching, will find himself to have been, in the hands of Providence, the blessed instrument "of converting many from the error of their ways."

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